

# The effect of social identification, personality traits, and transformational leadership on employees performance at the regional parliament secretariat of Southeast Sulawesi province, Indonesia



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**Abstract** This study aims to analyze the simultaneous and partial influence of social identification, personality traits, and transformational leadership on employee performance at the Regional Parliament Secretariat of Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The research uses an explanatory quantitative approach to examine how these psychological and behavioral factors contribute to improving work outcomes in a public-sector organization. The population of this study consists of 130 civil servants, and data were collected through a census method to ensure comprehensive coverage of all employees. Multiple linear regression was applied to test the relationships between variables and to determine the extent to which each factor contributes to enhancing performance. The results show that social identification positively affects employee performance, indicating that when employees have a strong sense of belonging, shared values, and emotional attachment to their organization, they are more committed and motivated to achieve collective goals. Personality traits also have a positive and significant impact on performance, suggesting that employees who demonstrate positive personal attributes such as conscientiousness, openness to experience, and emotional stability tend to perform their responsibilities more effectively and adapt better to organizational demands. Furthermore, transformational leadership plays an important role in improving employee performance through the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and act as a role model, thereby fostering a productive and supportive work environment. These findings imply that strengthening social identification, developing desirable personality traits, and promoting effective transformational leadership practices are key strategies to enhance employee performance in public organizations. The study contributes to the understanding of human resource management in government institutions and provides practical insights for policymakers and organizational leaders in improving overall organizational effectiveness.

**Keywords:** social identity, traits, leadership style, job performance

## 1. Introduction

An individual reflects an identity encompassing self-worth and self-esteem, consequently serving as the basis for cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes. Therefore, motivation is important for improving self-worth and self-esteem, orienting individuals either as unique entities with special needs or as enthusiastic members of social groups obligated to fulfill group obligations (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

With respect to the dimensions of social identification, Cameron (2004) proposed a three-dimensional model and measure of social identification consisting of cognitive centrality, in-group effects, and in-group ties. This method has received both theoretical and empirical support. The construct of social identity has become increasingly important in the social psychology literature since the development of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). A growing understanding of this construct originates from efforts to develop valid indicators, with many being derived from the scale developed by Brown et al. (1986). Although early work tended to view and measure social identity as a unidimensional concept, treating identification as a general attachment to an in-group, there is growing evidence within the field confirming that this method is inadequate (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Tajfel's (1978) original definition of the social identity construct, which refers to individuals' knowledge of belonging to social groups, coupled with significant and emotional values regarding group membership, reflects multidimensionality.

In addition to the notion that personality traits and transformational leadership affect employee performance in an organization (Trmal et al., 2015; Tiri et al., 2015; Purit Pongpearchan et al., 2016; Amin et al., 2016), personality traits also directly influence social identification, as reported by Asal Aghaz et al. (2014) and Bizumic et al. (2012). Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership states that leaders who exhibit transformational behavior motivate followers to transcend the cost–benefit relationships that characterize transactional leadership. Transformational leadership engages and empowers followers to become agents of change within an organization, generating performance and effort beyond what is achieved through transactional relationships.

Transformational leadership is intellectually stimulating and facilitates rational thinking and problem solving among followers. Under transformational leadership, followers prioritize the organization's objectives and values (Shamir et al., 1993) and are motivated not by the promise of extrinsic rewards but by identification with the inspiring vision set by the leader. The concept of charismatic leadership shows that individuals follow charismatic leaders due to personal trust in the leaders and their vision. Bass (1985) identified four dimensions of transformational leadership, namely, charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Later developments, the dimension of charisma became known as idealized influence, defined as the extent to which a leader behaves to be identified and followed. With respect to the relationship between performance and transformational leadership, (Wibowo, 2007) defined performance as the work result achieved by employees in carrying out duties in accordance with assigned responsibilities. Wibowo (2007) reported that three indicators shape employee performance, namely, quantity, quality, and timeliness of task execution.

On the basis of this analysis, no study has examined the simultaneous and partial effects of social identification, personality traits, and transformational leadership on employee performance at the Regional Parliament Secretariats of the Provinces in Indonesia. Therefore, the current study aimed to investigate these effects at the Regional Parliament Secretariat of Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

### 2.1. Social identification

The concept of social identification (including organizational identification, team identification, etc.) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Vanknippenberg & Vanschie, 2000) refers to the extent to which an individual is defined on the basis of membership in a particular group. The greater the identification with a particular group is, the more the individual is perceived in terms of membership in that group and the greater the sense of connection. Higher identification also leads the individual to be perceived in terms of characteristics typical of the group, with perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors increasingly governed by group membership (Hogg, 2003; Turner et al., 1987). Social identity (group membership) is an important source of self-esteem; hence, individuals with multiple evaluatively positive social identities, or even a relatively small repertoire of identities, can invest considerable energy in maintenance (Abrams & Hogg, 1990).

Cameron (2004) developed a valid model and measure of social identity on the basis of a study of in-group identification of real-world groups, which included the self-investment category of social identification (Leach et al., 2008). Cameron's model described social identification as having three measurement indicators:

**Cognitive centrality:** The amount of time spent thinking about in-group members or the cognitive characteristics of a particular group membership, similar to the self-categorization dimension identified by Ellemers et al. (1999).

**In-group affect:** The positive feelings associated with group membership, reflecting the affective dimension identified in many studies (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1999; Hinkle et al., 1989; Jackson, 2002) and similar to the positive evaluation component proposed by Leach et al. (2008)

**In-group ties:** Shared perceptions and bonds with other group members, which is consistent with many previous studies (Ellemers et al., 1999; Hinkle et al., 1989; Jackson, 2002; Karasawa, 1991) and comparable to the solidarity component proposed by Leach et al., 2008).

Cameron (2004) tested a unidimensional model of social identification, a two-dimensional model (cognitive and emotional aspects), and a three-factor model consisting of cognitive centrality, in-group effects, and in-group ties. Cameron reported that the three-factor model best explained the data in four different studies examining respondents' social identification with their university, gender, and nation.

### 2.2. Personality Traits

According to Matthews (2003), a science of personality traits requires an ultimate but difficult objective, the development of a satisfactory theory of personality traits. It is possible to assess an individual's level of extroversion and other traits as well as to show how these assessments can predict certain aspects of behavior. However, self-observation provides insight into why personality dimensions predict behavior. A key challenge is that personality can be represented at various levels of psychological description. For example, extroversion may be related to basic properties of the central nervous system, such as the excitability of individual neurons, information-processing styles, or the acquisition of social knowledge and beliefs.

Distinguishing between these broad possibilities is challenging, making it difficult for scientific methods to formulate specific hypotheses and rigorously test against experimental and observational evidence.

Costa & McCrae (1985) developed a measure of the Big Five personality traits using a scale called the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI). "NEO" stands for the first three domains measured, namely, emotional stability (neuroticism), concern for the environment (extroversion), and openness to experience. The NEO-PI was subsequently revised, creating the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R), which measures five traits (domains) and 30 facets with 240 items. This scale has two forms, namely, the S form (self-administered) and the R form (completed by another individual, such as a friend, partner, or expert). Costa and McCrae also developed the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO FF) scale, which comprises 60 statements and measures only the five broad dimensions without assessing facets. The NEO-FFI scale is typically used when time is limited and when global information about personality is sufficient. Moreover, Goldberg (1990) developed measurement indicators for the Big Five personality traits, namely, openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (emotional stability), summarized by the acronym OCEAN.

### 2.3. Transactional Leadership

Leadership is fundamentally the ability to influence subordinates to achieve shared organizational objectives (Yan & Yuet, 2025). Bass and Avolio (1993) identified personalization as part of the concept defining the dimensions of leadership, which is based on the assumption that leaders showing considerate behavior toward individuals also pay personal attention to followers' development. Although often considered synonymous, the study of transformational and transactional leadership behavior differs from Burn's (1978) work in two key areas. First, Burn (1978) posited that transactional and transformational leadership lie at opposite ends of the same dimension. Bass (1985) later stated that leadership styles exist in two separate dimensions and that the most effective leaders exhibit the behavioral characteristics of both. For example, John F. Kennedy and Franklin D. Roosevelt demonstrated transactional leadership behavior (such as favoring vote-buying and rewarding close associates) while showing inspirational leadership during times of national crisis (Bass, 1999).

The differing views were sharply contrasted at the time of the initial studies at Ohio State and Michigan. Second, Burns (1978) argued that leadership should be inherently good, meaning that effective leadership could increase the experiences of followers. Moreover, Bass (1985) asserted that an individual engaging in morally reprehensible behavior could still be a transformational leader by changing the attitudes and values of followers. Several studies have explored this potential "dark side" of transformational leadership (e.g., Brown & Trevino, 2006; Conger, 1993). Specifically, Conger (2007) claimed that transformational leaders could abuse influence by persuading followers to act in ways that conflict with personal values.

### 2.4. Performance

The concept of performance essentially represents a paradigm shift from the traditional idea of productivity. Initially, the term productivity was often used to describe the ability of an individual or organization to achieve specific objectives. The new productivity paradigm emphasizes actual performance, measuring the overall achievement of an organization, not only in terms of efficiency or physical dimensions but also in nonphysical (intangible) dimensions. With respect to the concept of performance, Rummler & Barch (1995) proposed three levels: (1) organizational performance, the achievement of outcomes at the organizational or unit level; (2) process performance, referring to performance at each stage of producing a product or service; and (3) individual performance, the achievement of effectiveness at the employee level.

Performance refers to the level of achievement in performing specific tasks. Organizational performance represents the accumulated performance of all organizational units (Soeryanto, 2010). Definitions of performance vary widely in the literature, but these differences can generally be categorized into two main perspectives.

Performance as outcomes: Bernardin (2003) defined performance as the record of outcomes produced from specific job functions or activities during a particular period. This definition relates performance to productivity and effectiveness (Ricard, 2002).

### 2.5. Hypothesis

On the basis of the literature review, this section proposes the following hypotheses, which are derived from the path diagram of the relationships between the variables shown in Figure 1.

The proposed hypotheses are as follows:

Social identification, personality traits, and transformational leadership have positive and significant effects on employee performance.

Social identification has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Personality traits have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

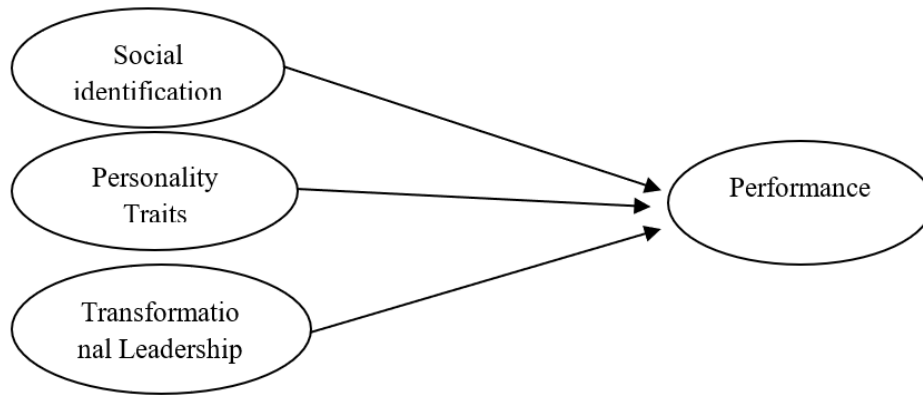


Figure 1 Path diagram relationship between variables.

3. Materials and methods

3.1. Data

This study used an explanatory method to examine the causal relationships between variables through hypothesis testing. The population comprised 130 employees at the Regional Parliament Secretariat of Southeast Sulawesi Province, and sampling was conducted via census. Furthermore, primary data were collected by administering a questionnaire to all 130 respondents. The questionnaire was administered periodically and uses a 5-point Likert scale.

3.2. Data analysis

Multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data. In this model, the variable symbols included  $X_1$  for social identification,  $X_2$  for personality traits,  $X_3$  for transformational leadership, and  $Y$  for performance. The multiple linear regression model is expressed as:

$$Y = c + aX_1 + bX_2 + dX_3 + u \quad (1)$$

Where in Equation (1),  $u$  is the residual of the multiple regression model, and  $c, a, b,$  and  $d$  are the model parameters to be estimated.

4. Results

As previously described, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis, examining the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, both simultaneously and partially. The estimated model parameters are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Estimation Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Model Parameters.

Constant and independent variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-statistics	P value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant (c)	11.097	2.426		4.574	0.000
Social Identification (X1)	0.470	0.087	0.354	2.797	0.002
Personality Traits (X2)	0.450	0.072	0.347	2.686	0.004
Transformational Leadership (X3)	0.322	0.107	0.302	2.420	0.005
F-statistics	= 5.577				
P value of F-Statistics	= 0.002				
R	= 0.801				
R Square	= 0.751				

a. Dependent Variable: Performance (Y).

The regression coefficient for social identification was 0.47, which was significant at the 1% level, as the p value (0.002) was less than 0.01. This confirmed that social identification had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Therefore, social identification among employees at the Regional Parliament Secretariat of Southeast Sulawesi Province was associated with greater performance.

The regression coefficient for personality traits was 0.45, which was significant at the 1% level, with a p value of 0.004, which was less than the 0.01 significance level. Therefore, better personality traits among employees could be related to greater performance. The regression coefficient for transformational leadership was 0.322, which was also significant at the 1% level, confirming that better transformational leadership was associated with higher performance.



## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Effect of Social Identification on Employee Performance

The analysis of the direct effect of social identification on employee performance revealed a positive and significant path coefficient, confirming that social identification positively influences employee performance. On the basis of the descriptive analysis, social identification was perceived favorably by employees. The highest average score was recorded for the in-group affect indicator, meaning that employees consistently felt positive about their group membership when working. This consequently influences employee performance, particularly in terms of work quantity.

The results reflected the conditions faced by employees at the Regional Parliament Secretariat of Southeast Sulawesi Province. For instance, social identification was continuously fostered and maintained through cognitive centrality, in-group ties, and in-group affect. This was considered essential for all members of the State Civil Apparatus Corps, both new and long-standing, to cultivate values of togetherness, knowledge sharing, and well-being among fellow employees.

According to Ellemers (1999), social identification refers to the extent to which an individual is defined as a member of a social category. Furthermore, Tajfel (in Hogg, 2003) reported that when identifying with a group, individuals tend to exhibit characteristics of ethnocentrism toward their in-group. For group identity (social identity), individuals or groups may be willing to participate in any activities to improve group prestige, a phenomenon known as the in-group favoritism effect.

### 5.2. Effect of Personality Traits on Employee Performance

The analysis of the direct effect of personality traits on employee performance revealed a positive and significant path coefficient, confirming that better personality traits led to improved employee performance. The descriptive analysis revealed that employees' perceptions of personality traits were generally positive. The highest average score was for the conscientiousness indicator, as employees were expected to pay attention to detail, be reliable, and diligently complete tasks.

The test revealed that conscientiousness was the dominant indicator contributing to personality traits. Therefore, employees who showed conscientiousness, attention to detail, reliability, and diligence in task completion positively impacted work quantity and were enabled to complete routine tasks effectively. On the basis of existing conditions in the work unit, employee recruitment was predominantly based on emotional ties, such as family, group, political party, and ethnic interests. Therefore, the recruited employees may lack the competence and professionalism needed to complete routine work effectively. There was also insufficient promotion attention for high-performing employees.

The results did not support previous studies, such as Yang (2014), where openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, and agreeableness significantly affected work performance. As supported by Fathimath Misha (2015), personality traits had a positive and significant effect on organizational performance. Srothmann et al. (2003) reported a significant relationship between personality traits and managerial performance.

To participate in any activities to improve group prestige, a phenomenon known as the in-group favoritism effect.

### 5.3. Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

The analysis of the direct effect of transformational leadership on employee performance revealed a positive and significant path coefficient. This confirmed a unidirectional relationship: higher levels of transformational leadership were associated with higher employee performance at the Regional Parliament Secretariat of Southeast Sulawesi Province.

The results were in line with the conditions faced by employees. Transformational leaders communicated and socialized the organization's vision and mission, using organizational objectives as a source of inspiration for employees. The results encouraged the prioritization of institutional interests over personal interests and the development of subordinates' abilities to solve problems via new methods or perspectives. The impact of inspirational motivation can be seen in subordinates' improved ability to understand and analyze problems, as well as in the quality of the solutions offered.

These results are consistent with those of Cavazotte (2013), who associated transformational leadership with higher levels of task performance and helping behavior in the workplace. Trmal et al. (2015) and Yew (2015) also reported that transformational leadership significantly affects employee performance. Similarly, Tiri (2015) stated that transformational leadership has a positive effect on individual and team performance.

## 6. Conclusions

Identification had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Therefore, strong social identification, reflected through *cognitive centrality*, *in-group affect*, and *in-group ties*, could improve performance.

Personality traits had a positive and significant effect on employee performance, confirming that better personality traits in carrying out tasks led to improved performance.

Transformational leadership had a positive and significant effect on employee performance, confirming that more effective leadership styles could result in better employee performance.

## Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

## Ethical Considerations

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Halu Oleo, Kendari, Indonesia, and complies with institutional ethical standards for research involving human participants.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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